

Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, July 23, 2019 7:00 p.m.

Heron Lake Watershed District office

Heron Lake, MN

ATTENDANCE

Paul Pietz, Dave Thiner, Jim Eigenberg, Julie Lopez, Jan Voit, and Catherine Wegehaupt

1. Call to Order

Paul Pietz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Agenda

A motion was made by Julie Lopez and seconded by Dave Thiner to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the March 18, 2019 HLWD Advisory Committee meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Dave Thiner and seconded by Jim Eigenberg to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion Items

United Message

Paul Pietz and Jan Voit revised the talking points into themes. The document was renamed United Message. Because there were not many members in attendance, no action was taken. It will be an agenda item for the September meeting.

HLWD

Annual Updates

Annual updates were given as follows: Cottonwood County, April 2; Jackson County, April 16; Nobles County, May 7; and Murray County, May 21.

Cottonwood County Citizen Guest Column

Jan Voit was a guest columnist for the Cottonwood County Citizen. The article was published in the May 8 edition.

Meeting with Scott Roemhildt

On May 22, Jan Voit met with Scott Roemhildt, MDNR. She explained HLWD activities. Discussion was held regarding ways to improve communication and foster partnership opportunities.

Heron Lake Waterfowl Working Group

The Heron Lake Waterfowl Working Group met on May 29. Mike Mooney welcomed everyone. Paul Waite, Delta Waterfowl gave a report on the Heron Lake Hen House Project. Dave Trauba, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) explained how the working group came to be. Joe Pavelko, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) gave a presentation about Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) accomplishments. Todd Arnold, University of Minnesota and Jan Voit gave an update on grant applications that have been submitted, but not awarded funding. Jon Schneider, Ducks Unlimited and Jan Voit provided an overview of the LSOHC proposal. Discussion was held regarding formation of a carp/fish committee and next steps for that effort.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) Meeting

On June 11, the West Fork Des Moines River WRAPS strategies session was held. Attendees identified the physical and social strategies needed to meet the 10-year targets for the WRAPS. The strategies were ranked. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will include these in the WRAPS report.

Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA) Meeting

The MAWA met on June 26. Emily Javens, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) Executive Director provided a legislative wrap up and MAWD update. Agency reports were given by Kevin Bigalke, Board of Water and Soil Resources and Rob Sip, Red River Watershed Management Board. Discussion was held regarding watershed-based funding, One Watershed One Plan, and the MAWA Sharepoint. Committee vacancies for the MAWD Strategic Plan and MAWA Executive Committee were filled.

MAWD Summer Tour

The MAWD Summer Tour began on June 26 with dinner at the Hjemkomst Center, a presentation by Mark Peihl, Red River historian, and a short river walk hosted by River Keepers. A bus tour was held on June 27. The tour highlighted water quality, drainage, flood damage reduction, soil conservation, and fish, wildlife, and outdoor recreation projects in the southern Red River Basin in Minnesota and North Dakota. The tour concluded on June 28 with presentations regarding the 2019 flood, multiple benefit projects and how they are accomplished, and the Fargo-Moorhead diversion project.

Agricultural Drainage + Future of Water Quality Workshop

Jim Buschena, Harvey Kruger, Wayne Rasche, and Jan Voit attended the bus tour to agricultural BMP project sites on July 10. The workshop was held on July 11. An overview of the day was given by Staci Williams. Welcome remarks were made by Dr. Aimee Shouse, Southwest Minnesota State University and Whitney Place, Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Presentations to the entire assembly were given by John McMaine, South Dakota State University, Henry Van Offelen, Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and John Kolb, Rinke Noonan and Al Kean, former BWSR. Breakout sessions covered the topics of saturated buffer designs, diversifying drainage solutions, soil organic matter, BMP storage design using modeling, taking One Watershed One Plan to the field, and the South Heron Lake project.

2020 Budget

Time was spent developing the 2020 budget. Wayne Rasche and Jan Voit met on July 16 to review the information and develop the information for the publication requirement.

Minnesota's Wage Theft Law

During a special session over Memorial Day weekend, the Minnesota House and Senate passed an omnibus bill that created new civil and criminal penalties for wage theft. The bill also created new record keeping requirements for Minnesota employers. Time was spent on July 17 and 18 completing the required forms and developing methods for the record keeping requirements.

Grant Applications

- Minnesota Conservation Collaboration. Through the USDA/NRCS, the HLWD and Houston Engineering, Inc. applied for funding for a to hire a person to work with the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp) to identify project locations and begin implementation. Not funded.
- Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Grant. This grant provides licenses to ESRI Arc Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Desktop Advanced and Desktop at a

discounted rate. ArcGIS is used for locating the best areas for BMPs, using Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp), aerial photography, mapping projects, and other GIS and mapping needs. The application was submitted on February 20. The HLWD's cost is \$200. Grant funds total \$5,387.43. Funded.

- LSOHC. Through the LSOHC, the HLWD applied for funding to use conservation easements and fee-title land acquisition to protect, enhance, and restore 990 acres of high-value wetland and prairie habitat and to hire a conservation technician. (Will know if we will get a hearing in early August.)
- Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Program. The two-page summary for the Section 319 Small Watersheds Focus Program was submitted on May 28. On June 4, MPCA hosted an interview for this program. In attendance were Abel Green, Katherine Pekarek-Scott, Greg Johnson, and Cindy Penny, MPCA; Jacob Rischmiller, Chuck Brandel, and Staci Williams, ISG; Scott Kronholm, HEI; and Jan Voit. Interview questions covered partnerships, capacity to achieve water quality goals, costs, handling landowner rejection, available tools, and successful community engagement. The HLWD was notified on June 21 that we were chosen for a face-to-face meeting. The meeting will be held on July 30.

Public Drainage Systems

Minnesota Viewers' Association Meeting

On April 4, Jan Voit attended the Minnesota Viewers' Association meeting in Redwood Falls. Following the business meeting and election of officers, Ron Ringquist gave a presentation regarding outlet benefits per Minnesota Statutes 103E.401.

Jackson County Ditch (CD) 3

Mediation for CD 3 was held on February 11 in New Ulm. Bruce Sellers, Chuck Brandel, Louis Smith, and Jan Voit attended. A tentative settlement was reached. Louis Smith presented the proposed settlement during a closed meeting on February 19. The board approved the settlement when the meeting was re-opened. The bid packets and advertisement were mailed on May 17. The bid awards are scheduled for July 23.

Jackson County Judicial Ditch (JD) 3

On April 12, the Jackson County Commissioners held a hearing on the transfer of jurisdiction of the JD 3 system pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 103D.625. The commissioners ordered the transfer of the system in its entirety to the HLWD.

On April 23, the Board approved the Findings and Order Initiating the Redetermination of Benefits and Appointing Viewers for JD 3. Bryan Murphy, Larry Murphy, and Shantel Hecht were appointed as viewers.

Drainage Management

Drainage project checklists were sent to Kevin Nordquist on May 14. On May 20, they were revised to include municipal contracting law and electronic bidding.

On June 5, Jan Voit met with Kevin Nordquist. We discussed bonding, assessments, road authorities, billing, drainage system checklist, and the proposed policy and procedure manual.

Jackson County JD 36

On July 15, a petition for the improvement of Jackson County JD 36 was received. The petition and supporting information were forwarded to Louis Smith for review. The information was also sent to Kevin Nordquist so that he could certify that the petitioners are the owners of record for the tracts of land passed over by the proposed improvement project.

HLWD Project 2

At the June 12 HLWD meeting, the Board approved the Findings and Order Initiating the Reestablishment of Drainage System Records for HLWD Project 2. Chuck Brandel was contacted on June 13. The landowner information meeting was held on July 23.

4. Adjourn

Jim Eigenberg made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Julie Lopez seconded this. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Julie Lopez

Acting Secretary